

MEPA/NEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of Proposed State Action Issue Shooting Preserve Permit
2. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
3. Name of Project Hart Shooting Preserve
4. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor (if other than the agency)
Agency _____
5. If Applicable:
Estimated Construction/Commencement Date N/A
Estimated Completion Date 1 September 2001
Current Status of Project Design (% complete) N/A
6. Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range and township)
Lewis & Clark County, T10N, R2W, Sec. 10
7. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:

<u>Acres</u>	<u>Acres</u>
(a) Developed:	(d) Floodplain.....
residential	
industrial	(e) Productive:
	irrigated cropland <u>250</u>
(b) Open Space/Woodlands/Recreation.....	dry cropland.....
	forestry
(c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas	rangeland..... <u>70</u>
	other

8. Map/site plan: attach an original 8 1/2" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.

See Attached Map

9. Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.

- (a) Permits:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
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- (b) Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
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- (c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Type of Responsibility</u>
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10. Narrative summary of the proposed action or project including the benefits and purpose of the proposed action:

The applicant proposes open a shooting preserve on 320 acres of the Hart Ranch in the Helena Valley. This action evaluated the 320 acres to permit the establishment of the business. The business proposes to sell the opportunity to shoot pheasants and chukar partridges by customers and the owning family. The benefit is primarily financial and recreational for the applicant with minor financial benefits for the community. Owner plans to stock at least 250 pheasants and 150 chukar partridges per year.

There are no other existing shooting preserves within a 10 mile radius.

11. List of agencies consulted during preparation of the EA:

N/A

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

1. Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. **Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil which would reduce productivity or fertility?		X				
c. **Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

2. <u>AIR</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. **Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (also see 13 (c))		X		o		
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. ***For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge, which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a)		X				
f. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- ** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM) Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

3. <u>WATER</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. •Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?		X				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?		X				
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c)		X				
m. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a)		X				
n. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- * Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
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4. <u>VEGETATION</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?		X			Yes, through owner initiated habitat improvements	See 4a. below
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?			X		Yes, Through owner weed control programs	See 4e. below
f. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		X				
g. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed)

4a. Currently 250 acres of the proposed preserve are irrigated hay fields which are also used as winter grazing. An additional 70 acres of dry land gully is used as winter range and as a calving area. The owner is exploring the possibilities of enhancing the existing habitat by establishing additional cover/shelter areas for birds. In addition, this will enhance the overall aesthetics of the hunting experience and improve the area for training of bird dogs.

4e. Introduction of noxious weed seeds may occur from vehicles and dogs that are carrying weed seeds. Landowners are required to control noxious weeds on their property. Any infestation brought in by vehicles, dogs, or other extraneous sources should be controlled by the landowner.

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** 5. <u>FISH/WILDLIFE</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?			X		Yes, through management practices	See 5b. below
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				
d. Introduction of new species into an area?			X			See 5d below
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?		X				
h. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f)		X				
i. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d)		X				
j. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed).

5b. Marginally suitable habitat for pheasants does exist around the Hart Ranch. A few pheasants do exist in the surrounding Helena Valley, but numbers have been declining and they are not considered to be a viable population.. Hungarian partridge also occur in the valley but their numbers are also minimal. The decline in both pheasants and Hungarian (Gray Partridge) is due to increased development, increasing loss of cover, and grain production. With the increased availability of shelter/cover on the Hart Ranch and neighboring properties, pheasant numbers could reestablish themselves in the area. Additionally, pheasant populations and "Huns", if later stocked, could be augmented and increase due to release of birds on the shooting preserve. The impact to the area could be mitigated through established management practices. Current and proposed practices include release of birds on a daily basis for shooters that day. This practice would promote the harvest of pen-reared birds and minimize the number of wild birds harvested on the shooting preserve. Applicant is required to release 20% more birds than are shot, in order to offset losses of native birds. It is not anticipated that this operation will have a detrimental effect on very minimal game bird numbers in the area. Additionally, some deer and antelope may be moved around the area by hunting. This will only be a temporary dispersal and should have no long-term effect on their populations.

5d. Very small wild populations of Hungarian partridge do occur in the immediate area. Pheasant populations in the area have declined to the point that they are considered to be gone, although the occasional pheasant is still seen in the valley. At least one rooster pheasant is known to exist on the Hart ranch this year. There are no known impacts if viable wild populations of pheasants become re-established and the impacts can be mitigated through management practices and limitations on species to be released. **Suitable habitat does not exist for establishment of Chukar Partridge populations.**

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B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u>	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Increases in existing noise levels?		X				See 6a below
b. Exposure of people to serve or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

6a. The shooting preserve is located in the Helena Valley and has several very large agricultural sections adjoining it, with no immediate neighbors. However, rapid development throughout the Valley could increase noise complaints due to increased noise levels due to shooting on the preserve. It must be noted that currently the Hart Ranch and the neighboring Diehl ranch and other property owners already allow shooting of geese and the occasionally hunting of deer and antelope on their properties.

7. <u>LAND USE</u>	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
e. Other:		X				

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8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u>	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?		X				
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACT</u>	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				See ! below.
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				
f. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

9c. Receipts from commercial hunting activity will generate profits to the Hart Ranch. Additional hunters in the area may also generate profits to area businesses.

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10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u>	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:			X			See 10a below
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?			X			See 10b below
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased used of any energy source?		X				
e. **Define projected revenue sources		X				
f. **Define projected maintenance costs.		X				
g. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

10a. Licensing, inspections, EAs, and imports will require government services.

10b. Taxes may increase as successful shooting preserves increases land values.

** 11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u>	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. **Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report)			X			See 11c below
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c)		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

11c. The preserve is open to the public and may also increase wild bird populations. Consequently, the preserve offers increased hunting opportunities both of pen-reared stock and perhaps of future wild birds. However, the shooting of pen-reared birds on a shooting preserve is an historic change to traditional hunting recreation in the area.

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12. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u>	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. **Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?		X				
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12.a)		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. <u>SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE</u>	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:						
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources that create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. ***For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e)		X				
g. ****For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- * Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
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PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW, CONTINUED

1. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:

No Action - Application for preserve denied and current agricultural endeavors continue.
Permit Issued - No restrictions.
Permit Issued With Restrictions.

2. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:
None

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

PART IV. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required (YES/NO)? If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.

No this expansion will have minimal effect on the environment and general public.

2. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

Little or No public involvement. Traditional hunting already exists in and around the Hart Ranch. As development increases in the area, noise complaints could increase as could anti-hunting pressure from non-hunting population moving into the area.

3. Duration of comment period, if any.

20 days from date of release.

4. Name, title, address and phone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:

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